

College of Agriculture and Home Economics'
Silver City Town Hall Meeting
Aug. 22, 2007

Dean Catlett convened the meeting shortly after 10 a.m. and had the associate deans introduce themselves before opening the floor for comments.

Gloria Terrazas-Barnes, vice chair and economic and community development planner for the Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments (Catron, Grant, Luna and Hidalgo counties), was the first to speak. She said she had called on NMSU before and had wonderful experiences. She was working on the Ft. Bayard project and there were concerns among the Chamber of commerce for customer service and hospitality training for both employees and employers for small businesses including hotels and restaurants. Needed training included training on employee relations for employers.

She also said there was a need for health services training in high schools, life skills, vocational and computer literacy training. Doña Ana Community college's bridge programs are a good example of programs that are needed. We should seek creative ways to support needed programs through Workforce Investment Act funds and other sources. She was also very interested in efforts to develop a senior workforce.

Martha Sayles, president of the Extension and Research Support Council asked how county Extension offices that were strapped for time were going to be able to cope with calls for university-wide Extension and distance education.

Tamara Ogilvie, Chair of the New Mexico Beef Council, said the council needs to partner with NMSU to study the impact of changes in the beef check-off program that are proposed. A doubling of the check-off fee could have both benefits and burdens. She also expressed the need to address issues related to endangered species, the wolf reintroduction and other wildlife issues in light of ranchers' concerns and the growing tourism industry in western New Mexico.

Beverly Allen-Ananins, coordinator of the Grant County community Health Council, said the council stood to be able to attract a great deal more funding to address health needs in the area, if they can get good evaluation research conducted by NMSU experts that will allow them to use evidence-based information in their proposals. She pointed out that they need evaluations of projects such as equine therapy.

Michael Trujillo, executive vice president of AmBank in Silver City, said there is a tremendous need to address the work ethic of the upcoming generation and that it needed to be addressed before high school. (Dean Catlett said research indicated that work ethics are established between 10 and 13 years of age).

Margie McKeen, Extension and Research Support Council member from Catron County, said there was a need to educate the public on issues related to wildlife and ranching, wolf reintroduction, elk populations, etc. It is vital to keep agriculture in the

picture and not to get too far from the land with our programs. She said there was a need have an agricultural science center in the southwestern part of the state.

Harold Kuentler, Hidalgo County commissioner, said that the county wanted assistance as they recruited dairies to the county. They are traveling to dairy expositions to recruit. The county agent is aware and supportive. He reiterated that there was a need to keep young people close to agriculture and he said: “Without agriculture, NMSU was not only just another liberal arts college, it was just another liberal college. He was concerned that students from the county felt intimidated from expressing their views in liberal classroom settings at NMSU.

Mary Ann Sedillo, Grant County commissioner, said there was a great need to reach parents on assistance as a means of helping them be a good influence on their children. There was a need for all universities to get involved in public schools and reach students at a young age to get them to be aspiring to go to college.

The dean and associate dean responded to most comments, discussing current, proposed, and potential capacities to deal with the issues raised. The formal part of the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m. followed by informal interaction and lunch.